

# ANNUAL REPORT

On the Health of the NORTHALLERTON URBAN DISTRICT for the Year 1895.

NORTHALLERTON.

*To the Chairman and Members of the Urban District Council :*

GENTLEMEN,

I herewith present my Annual Report of the Health of the Urban District of Northallerton, for the year 1895, as your Medical Officer of Health.

## POPULATION.

In estimating the population of Northallerton, upon which all the death and birth rates and other average rates are based, I must again resort to the system of taking the average number of people in every inhabited house. This average is based on that of the census of 1881 and 1891, as follows :

Population.	Inhabited Houses.	Uninhabited Houses.	Average No. per Inhabited House.
1881—3,692	764	62	4·83
1891—3,802	785	48	4·84
Estimated Population.			Average.
1891—4,177	863	6	4·84
1895—4,259	880	1	4·84

From the above table it will be seen that Northallerton is rapidly growing; there are ninety-five more houses inhabited than there were in 1891, and the number of uninhabited houses has decreased from 48 in 1891 to 1 in 1895, and several houses are now in course of construction.

The estimated population for the year 1895 is therefore **4259**, being an increase of 82 on the previous year, and 457 on the last census.

## DEATH RATE.

There have been 69 deaths during the year, 8 of these occurred among people not belonging to this district, namely:—3 in H.M. Prison, 3 in Workhouse, 1 in the Cottage Hospital, and 1 from the Rural District. After deducting these from the total the number will be reduced to 61 deaths occurring among the inhabitants of the District, making an average yearly death-rate of 14·32 per 1,000

This death-rate is very low, considering the severe cold weather we had at the beginning of the year, and which was followed by an epidemic of Influenza, and also, that for three months of the year the death-rate was 22 per 1,000 per annum, viz. : January, February and December.

The long-continued cold weather in the first quarter of the year no doubt caused the deaths of many old people, and also of those in a delicate state of health, for out of the 21 deaths in January, February and March, 9 were over 60 years of age, of the remainder 5 died of Phthisis, and 3 were under 12 months old.

Out of the total number of deaths, 10 occurred among children under 12 months old, shewing the infant death-rate as 90·9 per 1,000 registered births. 4 of these infants died from diarrhœa, which was prevalent during the summer and autumn months. 19 deaths occurred in people over 65 years of age. There have been no deaths from any of the Fevers known as Typhoid, Typhus, Scarlet, or Small-pox.

14 deaths were due to Phthisis, which seems to be prevalent, and possibly due to the recent epidemics of Influenza.

There have been 110 births, 52 males and 58 females, The BIRTH-RATE for the year is 25·82 per 1,000.

The General Health of the District has been good throughout the greater part of the year. An epidemic of Influenza prevailed in the early months, but from April to July the town was very healthy.

A case of Diphtheria occurred in Bowman's Yard, in the month of January, and was removed to the Fever Hospital. The sanitary condition of this yard was very bad, but nothing could be done until after the thaw set in.

In June Scarlet Fever made its appearance in the district, but as it had been present in the villages and towns in the neighbourhood, this was not to be wondered at ; but by prompt isolation in the Fever Hospital, it was prevented from assuming an epidemic form, but it kept breaking out in different parts of the town from June to December: there have been 10 cases in all.

Diarrhœa was very prevalent in August, September and October, and caused 4 deaths, all being children under 12 months old.

Typhoid Fever shewed itself in September and October. There were seven cases in all.

In investigating the cause of the outbreak of both the epidemic of Diarrhœa and Typhoid Fever, I have come to the conclusion that the filthy condition of the ashpits is responsible for, at all events, a great number of cases. The ashpits in the yards during the warm months of the year contain a filthy mixture of decomposing matter, composed of human excrement, vegetable refuse, and liquid slops ; this abominable mass of filth gives off stinking fumes, which are positively poisonous to human beings, and more especially children. I cannot too strongly condemn the antiquated system of storing up for months the excrement which ought to be got rid of as speedily as possible, more especially in the crowded yards. The cause of contaminated water can hardly be said to exist now in Northallerton, as the purest of drinking water is supplied to 99 per cent. of the houses. The system of trapping off the house drains from the main is also generally in use, so that I am obliged to come to the conclusion that the filthy privies and ashpits, and the means of emptying them, are the probable causes of both Diarrhœa and Typhoid Fever in Northallerton. Besides the fumes which come from these places, the ground about them is saturated with the liquid which oozes from their contents, and when they are emptied, besides the spilling about of the contents in the yards, the whole of the





abominable matter is heaped up in the main street for several hours in the early morning, and anyone who happens to be about at the time, knows too well what a fearful stench comes from these disgusting heaps ; and after they have been lead away much remains behind, and becoming dried, is blown about and inhaled in the form of dust by passers by, as well as being deposited on provisions exposed for sale in shops and in the open street.

The Fever Hospital has proved itself a great boon to the town in preventing the spread of both Typhoid and Scarlet Fever, and has ample accomodation for the cases likely to occur in the town. What is most needed is a steam disinfecting apparatus, as it is quite impossible to disinfect wearing apparel and bedding without the aid of such means. I should also recommend a large cloak and hood for the medical attendants to wear when they are visiting patients in the Fever Hospital.

During the year I have examined numerous samples of drinking-water, and all those that were unfit for domestic purposes were condemned, and the Town's Water Supply laid on. The Town's water has been supplied to twenty-six houses during the year.

Many sanitary alterations and improvements have been carried out during the year. Among many others, Bowman's Yard, where the case of Diphtheria occurred has been thoroughly attended to, the cesspools which were in a very dangerous state have been done away with, and a properly trapped sanitary drain laid down. The drains in Ward's Yard have been disconnected from the main sewer and ventilated. The Durham Ox has also been put into a thoroughly sanitary condition. The main sewers have been systematically flushed throughout the year, and are, with one or two exceptions, working very well. The sewer which I should advise the Council to attend to is the one at the East side of the town : this sewer is silted up, and has broken in once or twice. I should recommend a part of this sewer to be taken up and relaid with proper sanitary pipes.

I should also recommend automatic flushing tanks at the head of each section of sewers, as the sewer at the North End of the town is also silting up.

There has only been one complaint of overerowding under the Factory and Workshops Act during the year. I visited the workshop and found that the room was too small for the number of people employed, but new rooms were provided and the nuisance in consequence abated.

I received a letter from the Local Government Board on the 1st November, 1895, asking for information of (1) the sanitary condition of the District, more especially as regards drainage, means of excrement disposal, &c. ; (2) the work done by the Medical Officer of Health ; (3) the measures of Sanitary Improvement required to be carried out in the District.

The sanitary condition, with the exceptions I have already quoted, is fairly good. As regards the disposal of excrement there is much room for improvement. There are three systems in use in the town. (1) that of immediate removal by the water system, which is of course the best method as far as the health of the town is concerned. This system is more employed now, since the water supply has been laid on than formerly. (2) the antiquated and abominable system of storing up the excrement and other filth in privies and ashpits in some cases for months. This system is prevalent throughout the town, and is the most unsanitary system that could be employed. (3) The dry earth system. This is used only in a very few instances : this system ranks next to the water system.

What I should recommend this Authority to adopt is the Pail System. Large galvanized iron pails provided for each privy and emptied as often as required, the full ones being taken away and replaced by thoroughly cleansed empty ones. This would do away with the disgusting heaps of filth we see in the street in the early morning. It would also facilitate the work of the scavengers, as a truck could be made to carry about two dozen pails, an empty pail being taken off the truck and placed in the privy and the full one put in the place of the empty one and taken away. The water system of disposing of the excrement is excellent in its way but complicates the sewage system very much.

The question of sewage treatment is under your consideration. I think the time has now come when this question must be attended to, and taking into consideration the flatness of the district, I am of opinion that the sewage could be treated best by depositing tanks, and precipitating the suspended impurities by means of chemicals, such as the oxygen system in use at Halifax, or any other system which this authority thought best.

I am, Gentlemen,

Yours obediently,

CHARLES TWEEDY.

